4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

in its mother's arms or lap than in a cradle. If a child was to be put to sleep it was sometimes during the day laid on a mattress on the floor; if it was put in a cradle it was rocked to sleep. Women in a tailor's posture could be seen to stretch out the one leg to move the cradle without losing their balance. 854

Nursing. According to the Coran the period of nursing is a full two years. However, it says in the Sure 2, verse 233 that "no one should be charged beyond his capacity .... If they (parents) desire to 853
wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, it is no sin for them ....". In Southern [183]
Kurdistan children whose mothers were able to do so were nursed until they reached the age of two. However, many of the women I met were unable to nurse their children themselves. The reason for this may be the lack of proteins owing to the uniform diet, of which rice was the main constituent. [144]
Milk powder was sold in the city. It was bought and used, but with poor results, as it was not mixed with sufficient care, and adequate hygienic measures were not taken. On one occasion I saw a 4 months old baby, which was suffering from what the Arab doctor called "green diarrhoea" was given in turn a milk mixture, iced-water, and strong sweet tea. From my interpreter's home in Sulaimani the sick [177]
child was taken to the hospital, where it was examined by the doctor, but the mother refused to let it be admitted to hospital. On the days following a nurse came and gave it injections against the stomach trouble diagnosed, and gave instructions concerning what the child could - and particularly what it could not - eat; but her directions were not followed. As a last measure to keep life in the baby, a woman who was nursing her own child was summoned in order that the sick baby could be placed at her breast, and on the last night the baby was alive someone was sent to this woman to obtain some of her milk. My interpreter told me that the mother of the sick baby had also been unable to nurse the previous child, which, at the time I was staying in the home, was three years old. My interpreter had kept her little half-sister alive by the help of raw yolks of egg. One was so accustomed to a high infant mortality that a child's life was not considered assured until it began to eat with adults. A [165]
certain fatalism was evinced about the death of infants[1].

As Islam permits no form of birth control, pregnancies are as frequent as the long nursing period 848
permits. For example, my interpreter's 35 year old mother had been pregnant 12 times, though on 872
several occasions this had been interrupted by natural abortion. The remainder had run their time, but so many of the children had died young that when I visited the home there were only three living, a son of 20, and two daughters aged 23 (my interpreter) and 22. The other wife, "my father's wife" as my interpreter called her, was 37 and had given birth 13 times. Nine of these offspring were alive: five daughters (19, 17, 16, 13 and 3 years of age) and four sons (13, 8, 5 and 4 months).

Much was related that in some districts in Egypt a husband is not permitted to see sexes while his 753
wife is nursing in order that the child shall not get sperm all over its body[2]. After I had used a not 854
very strongly-scented lotion whilst changing in my interpreter's home, it was declared that the condition of the sick infant had deteriorated because I had been in the same room.

A boy, then, is more desired than a girl, *viz.* Mohammed, who abolished the ancient Arab custom 847
of burying new-born female infants alive, hints several times in the Coran that male children are 849
more desirable than females[3]. The birth of a girl in Kurdistan might cause a husband, subjected to

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Fig. 101. Kurd with rags tied on, planted inside stone wall on the burial ground outside Kalateh.

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trees which have no rags at all. Fraser[6] also distinguishes between these two cases when writing about "heaps of stones" in Kurdistan, which most correspond to Pelliot's[7] saints' graves in Luristan; the matter is also referred to by Bishop[8]. Fraser says: "Those who have benefited tear shreds from their shirts or trousers and tie them to the bushes around", but he also speaks of other graves of great men marked with "... a pole with a flag to point out the place to utter a prayer". Minorsky[9] also distinguishes between the two things, but lets them be found at the same spot, saying: "... a low stonewall" (that surrounds a holy grave) "on which ... grow real white flags ... On the branches which overhang the shrine rags and scraps of clothing ...". It was said concerning the grave with the rag tree on the building site near Bebelanpul, that it was pregnant women and sick persons who had become ill that hung up the rags as votive offerings. This agrees with Pelliot's[10] report that the Lurs "servir les femmes pour qu'elles deviennent fécondes ..." to the holy graves.

Donaldson[11] refers to "desire giving trees", though without a grave, and goes on to say: "Perhaps at one time a holy man, or a descendant of the Prophet, sat under such a tree ... it came to be re-

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